

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 A-01 OPR-02 SY-05 USSS-00
MCT-01 OMB-01 PC-01 AID-05 HA-05 SCS-06 CA-01
OC-06 CCO-00 IO-13 ACDA-12 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02
SS-15 ICA-11 /135 W

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P 051735Z JUN 78

FM AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 176

INFO AMEMBASSY BRAZZAVILLE

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL LUBUMBASHI

AMCONSUL BUKAVU

C O N F I D E N T I A L KINSHASA 5771

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, SEDU, CG

SUBJECT: UNREST AT KINSHASA CAMPUS OF ZAIRE'S NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

REF: KINSHASA 5730

1. SUMMARY: STUDENTS AT THE KINSHASA CAMPUS OF ZAIRE'S NATIONAL UNIVERSITY (UNZAZ) WENT ON AN ANTI-REGIME RAMPAGE DURING THE EVENING OF MAY 31, SACKING THE VICE-RECTOR'S RESIDENCE, DAMAGING AUTOMOBILES BELONGING TO THE VICE-RECTOR, THE MINISTER OF SPORTS AND THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, AND LOOTING A FOOD OUTLET CONTROLLED BY MOBUTU'S UNCLE LITHO. A BLEND OF GOZ COERCION AND CONCESSIONS HEADED OFF FURTHER DEMONSTRATIONS SCHEDULED FOR JUNE 4. END SUMMARY.

2. TENSIONS AT THE CAMPUS HAD BEEN HEIGHTENED FIRST BY THE OCCUPATION OF KOLWEZI, WHICH MANY STUDENTS HOPED WOULD TOPPLE THE MOBUTU REGIME, AND THEN BY A SHARP REDUCTION IN THEIR
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FOOD ALLOTMENT TO ONE-FOURTH THE NORMAL AMOUNT. THE SPARK WAS PROVIDED BY THE VICE-RECTOR, A FIGURE UNPOPULAR FOR HIS AUTHORITARIANISM AND FOR BELONGING TO MOBUTU'S ETHNIC GROUP. AT APPROXIMATELY NINE O'CLOCK IN THE EVENING OF MAY 31, THE VICE-RECTOR ORDERED TWO FEMALE STUDENTS WHO WERE TALKING TO A MALE FRIEND IN FRONT OF THE MEN'S DORMITORY TO RETURN TO THEIR ROOMS. WHEN THE MALE STUDENT CHALLENGED HIM, POINTING

OUT THAT THEY WERE NOT VIOLATING UNIVERSITY REGULATIONS,
THE VICE-RECTOR HAD THE STUDENT ARRESTED AND BADLY BEATEN.

3. A GROUP OF STUDENTS THEN ATTACKED THE CAMPUS POLICE HEAD-
QUARTERS, MAULED THE POLICE AND FREED THEIR COMRADE. TAKING
HIM TO THE UNIVERSITY CLINIC FOR TREATMENT, THEY WERE INFORMED
THE THE VICE-RECTOR HAD LEFT ORDERS PROHIBITING THE CLINIC FROM
TREATING THE STUDENT. AFTER AN UNSUCCESSFUL ATTEMPT BY TELEPHONE
TO CONVINCE THE VICE-RECTOR TO RESCIND HIS ORDER, THE STUDENTS
MARCHED ON HIS RESIDENCE. DISCOVERING THAT HE HAD FLED WITH
HIS FAMILY, THE STUDENTS SACKED HIS HOUSE AND DAMAGED ONE OF
HIS CARS. DURING THEIR RETURN THE STUDENTS ENCOUNTERED THE
MINISTER OF SPORTS, WHO REPORTEDLY ABANDONED HIS CAR AND FLED
ON FOOT AT SIGHT OF MOB. AFTER SMASHING THE CAR'S WINDOWS AND
ROLLING IT ON ITS SIDE, THE STUDENTS WENT ON TO FIND THE MINISTER
OF AGRICULTURE'S MERCEDES, WITH WHICH THEY DEALT IN A SIMILAR
FASHION. GIVEN THE PRESENCE OF SEVERAL OTHER VEHICLES WHICH
WERE IGNORED, IT WAS CLEAR THAT THE STUDENTS WERE INTENT UPON
ATTACKING ANY CONVENIENT SYMBOL OF THE REGIME. THEY THEN
EMPTIED THE CAMPUS OUTLET OF SGA, A PARASTATAL FOOD IMPORTER
AND DISTRIBUTOR CONTROLLED BY MOBUTU'S UNCLE LITHO.

4. THE GOZ DISPATCHED TROOPS TO THE SCENE TO RESTORE ORDER.
FEARING AN ESCALATION OF VIOLENCE, THE UNZAZ ACADEMIC
SECRETARY PERSUADED THE TROOP COMMANDER TO CORDON OFF THE
CAMPUS RATHER THAN ENTERING THE FRAY. THE STUDENTS RETURNED
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TO THEIR ROOMS AND OFFERED NO RESISTANCE THE NEXT DAY WHEN
SECURITY OFFICIALS BEGAN ARRESTING THE ALLEGED ORGANIZERS OF
THE BRIEF FLARE-UP. THE ARRESTS, COUPLED WITH THE THREAT OF
MILITARY INTERVENTION AND THE DELIVERY OF ADDITIONAL FOOD
SUPPLIES TO THE STUDENT RESTAURANT, REPORTEDLY BROUGHT ABOUT
THE CANCELLATION OF A DEMONSTRATION PLANNED FOR JUNE 4 TO
MARK THE ANNIVERSARY OF A 1969 STUDENT MARCH WHICH RESULTED
IN MANY STUDENT DEATHS AT THE HANDS OF GOZ TROOPS.

5. COMMENT: FOOD RIOTS AND ANTI-REGIME SENTIMENTS ARE FAMILIAR
ASPECTS OF THE CAMPUS LANDSCAPE, PARTICULARLY WITH THE APPROACH
OF EXAMINATIONS. THE EVENTS OF LAST WEEK WERE NEVERTHELESS
UNUSUAL IN THEIR LEVEL OF VIOLENCE, AND ARE INDICATIVE OF GROWING
TENSIONS ELSEWHERE IN ZAIRE. FORTUNATELY, THE WILLINGNESS OF
THE TROOP COMMANDER TO AVOID UNNECESSARY BLOODSHED HELPED
TO PREVENT MORE SERIOUS CONSEQUENCES.
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